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News Release

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KFD training goes high-tech

LĪHU'E – Seizing the opportunity to enhance their training program, Kaua'i Fire Department officials applied for and was awarded part of a \$5 million Rural Job Training Initiative Grant from the Department of Labor.

Other recipients include Big Island, Kaua'i, Maui and O'ahu community colleges and fire departments throughout the state.

KFD received \$162,000, which they used to purchase high tech equipment and supplies. Now the fire department is able to utilize video streaming for training purposes.

"I'd like to acknowledge Senator Daniel Inouye for being instrumental in obtaining the grant money for the state," said Kaua'i Fire Chief Robert "Bob" Westerman. "Because of his efforts we're tapping into the latest technology to train our personnel."

Last week, KFD conducted its first session utilizing video streaming.

"It was awesome," remarked Captain John Blalock, who's in charge of the fire department's training program. "There were no glitches. Everything went smoothly."

Personnel at all seven Kaua'i fire stations were able to view a live online training session on extrication techniques which was being taped at the Emergency Operating Center.

In the past, only two out of the three KFD battalions attended a scheduled training session, while the one that was on-duty had to watch a video of the training at a later date.

“The benefits to using video streaming are tremendous,” said Blalock. “Now all of our firefighters can attend the training sessions, either in-person or virtually, opportunities for promotion of fire personnel have increased and the cost savings to the county is huge.”

He explained that overtime expenses for training will be substantially reduced and no special arrangements have to be made for back-up personnel to man the stations.

In addition, each training session will be videotaped and uploaded into the fire department’s online library.

“Currently we have about 40 videos in our training library. What’s exciting is that firefighters can now access them online 24/7,” said Blalock.

Fire program coordinator Denise Latinen said she is impressed with how far KFD has taken their video streaming project.

“Compared to the other counties, Kaua’i is leading the way with this brand new technology,” said Latinen.

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